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## THE LOVER'S MASS IN ENGLAND AND IN SPAIN

The fifteenth-century poem which is here termed *The Lover's Mass* has been twice printed, once by me in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* for January, 1908, and previously by the late Rev. T. F. Simmons in his *Lay Folks' Mass Book*, EETS, 1879, under the title of *Venus' Mass*. It exists, so far as I know, in but one manuscript, the post-Chaucerian codex Fairfax 16, of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. In that manuscript it consists of Introibo, Confiteor, Misereatur, Officium, Kyrie, Gloria, Orison, and Epistle in Prose; no more. Its metrical variations are striking and beautiful; the Officium is a rondeau, the Gloria is in ten-line stanzas, having the fifth and tenth lines short, the Orison is an eight-line stanza, and the rest of the work is in couplets, excepting the Kyrie. This, the most elaborate portion of the poem, has an internally rhymed ringing arrangement similar to Chaucer's *Anelida* 272-80, 333-41 and to Barclay's *Ship of Fools*, ed. Jamieson, II, 290. The text bears in the manuscript no author's name; Simmons ascribed it to Lydgate, following probably Warton-Hazlitt, IV, 60, and he is in turn followed by Neilson in his monograph on the *Court of Love*, p. 223. Brandl in *Grundr. d. Germ. Philologie*, II, 692, considers this authorship impossible, a view in which I concur.

Being now engaged upon a re-editing of this and other texts for my volume of fifteenth-century English verse, I went over again the various features of this *Mass*, and in the course of a rambling investigation followed clues which led to Spain. In the *Missa de Amor* of Suero de Ribera, a Castilian poet of John II's reign, 1406-54, I find the same structural idea as in the *Lover's Mass*, with much less variety in stanza. Ribera writes in the four-beat line throughout, his stanzas varying in length from six to twelve lines; the sections are headed as Confession, Gloria, Epistola, Evangelium, Credo, Prefacio, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei. According to Novati, in his "La parodia sacra nelle letterature moderne" (*Studi critici*, 1889), there is a poem by Juan de Dueñas, entitled *La Missa de Amores*, which los Rios says was imitated by Ribera in this brief poem. This earlier work is apparently still unprinted, as is a poem by Diego de

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Valera, termed the *Litany of Love* by Post in his *Mediaeval Spanish Allegory*, 1915.

The question of the relation between the Spanish and the English treatment now arises. If we assume a common source, French, Italian, or what not, as inspiration for both, we have that source to discover; if we believe that the Spanish gave the unknown English writer the incentive to his far more elaborate though incomplete work, we must seek for proof of closer literary connection between Spain and England in the earlier fifteenth century than has been regarded probable. The union of John of Gaunt with Constance of Castile in 1371, and his subsequent placing of his two daughters upon the thrones of Castile and of Portugal, opened a smooth channel for the exchange of court-poetry, most quickly evidenced perhaps in the rendition of Gower's *Confessio Amantis* into Spanish prose; and the similarity in taste and in method between the Castilian fifteenth century and some of the English transitional versifiers is curious. Thus, Pedro Lopez de Ayala, who died in 1407, is said to have made Boccaccio's *De Casibus* known in Castile; and the number of mediocre Castilian poems of the next generation which show the influence of that literary blight is closely parallel to the sequence of imitations in English headed by that of Lydgate about 1420. The group of Spanish versifiers, Ribera and others, represented in the appendix to Ochoa's *Rimas Ineditas* of the Marquess de Santillana, etc., displays such agreements with contemporary England in choice of subject and mode of treatment as could well follow from an equal literary poverty seeking sustenance at an identical source.

The topic requires much investigation; for the present my query of a possible Spanish influence on the *Lover's Mass* must remain a query. That its author was a man of wide reading, as of sensitive metrical ear, is however obvious. The Kyrie adds to the devices already used by Chaucer the characteristically Provençal *coblas capfinidas*; the Epistle enumerates with feeling a list of romances evidently known to the writer, and develops an image taken from Boccaccio's *De Casibus*; and if we are to add to this list the borrowing of the structural idea from Castilian, we have indeed a cosmopolitan student.

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